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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 COLOMBO 001062

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR D, SA, SA/INS; NSC FOR E.MILLARD  
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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [CE](#) [NO](#) [LTTE](#)

SUBJECT: NORWEGIAN PEREGRINATIONS FOR PEACE

REF: COLOMBO 1013 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: Ambassador Jeffrey J. Lunstead. Reason 1.5 (b,d).

#### SUMMARY

1. (C) Norwegian visit to Delhi was largely a briefing for the Indians, who expressed support for Norway and its role in the peace process. Both GSL and LTTE have asked Norway to continue to try to find a formula to allow them to resume talks. Norwegians may wait until after July 10 Provincial elections before making a new proposal, but Solheim will visit Sri Lanka next week for discussions. LTTE continues to be upset about alleged GSL support for breakaway leader Karuna. The GSL is taking some steps which "test the limits" of the Cease Fire Agreement. END SUMMARY.

2. (U) Ambassador met with Norwegian Ambassador Hans Brattskar June 22 to discuss recent Norwegian activities in support of Sri Lankan Peace Process. These included meetings last week between Norwegian Deputy Foreign Minister Helgesen and Sri Lankan President Kumaratunga in London, between Norwegian Special Envoy Solheim and Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) adviser Balasingham also in London, and Helgesen's visit to New Delhi. Solheim will return to Sri Lanka next week.

#### BRIEFING THE INDIANS IN NEW DELHI

3. (C) Brattskar traveled to New Delhi for Helgesen's meetings with the new Indian government June 19. Helgesen met with Foreign Minister Singh, National Security Adviser Dixit, and the Foreign Secretary. Brattskar described the meetings as basically a briefing by Norway on the peace process, with very little input by the Indians. The Indian officials, he said, were supportive of Norway and its role, and asked many questions. They said that India would play a positive role, and that there would be "no surprises." Brattskar did note that Dixit said that his own views on Sri Lanka were naturally colored by his experiences there as High Commissioner from 1985-87.

#### CBK AND BALASINGHAM IN LONDON

4. (C) Brattskar said that Helgesen had a two hour one-on-one meeting with President Kumaratunga in London last week. (Kumaratunga was in London to attend her daughter's graduation from medical school.) They had a "good exchange." Helgesen clarified for her that it is not Norway which is insisting that the two sides agree on a statement before they can meet again. Kumaratunga had suggested that the two sides could proceed on the basis of an "understanding" if they could not reach agreement on a statement. But, said Brattskar, LTTE distrust is so deep that they will not move forward without "something solid."

5. (C) The good news is that both sides have asked the Norwegians to continue to work the issue. For the LTTE, this was confirmed by both Balasingham in London and by Thamilselvan in his meeting with Brattskar on June 16 (Reftel). Brattskar noted that the two sides had been "very very close" to an agreement several weeks ago, but that the government had kept putting new things in. Norway would now try to come up with a new, and simpler, text to which both sides could agree. (Brattskar confirmed that the statement would be one by Norway, not by the two sides.) The Norwegians were considering what such a statement might look like, and also what might be the right time to try to move ahead. One school of thought is that the Government will not be able to agree to anything until after the Provincial Council Elections on July 10, so Norway might delay until that point. Brattskar did say, however, that Special Envoy Eric Solheim would return to Sri Lanka next week for talks with both sides.

6. (C) Brattskar agreed with Ambassador that President Kumaratunga had so far been much more flexible than the LTTE. Her last offer -- to conclude negotiations on an interim administration and then to begin negotiations on final issues while the interim administration was being set up -- was

quite forward-leaning. The LTTE was so suspicious, however, that they had not moved at all, said Brattskar. He noted that Government actions tended to reinforce LTTE suspicions. The LTTE was especially worked up about the situation in the East and alleged Government support to Karuna. (See Septel for more details.) Balasingham and Thamilselvan had both stressed the need to maintain the Cease Fire Agreement (CFA). Unfortunately, Brattskar said, the Government was taking some steps which were not good at this time. For instance, the Sri Lankan Navy and the LTTE were now embroiled in a dispute over movement of LTTE cadres by boat. The Navy was attempting to unilaterally change the procedures which had been followed until now. Brattskar described this as the Navy testing the limits, which was not good at this sensitive time. He also said that Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission head General Furehove was quite unhappy about this. (Ambassador will see Furehove, who is currently out of Colombo, early next week.)

COMMENT

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17. (C) The current Norwegian tactic of stepping back for a minute and then trying to come up with a fresh formulation which could satisfy both sides seems a good one at the moment. Ambassador will make points about all sides needing to compromise and necessity to support the Cease Fire when he holds an on the record session with leading editors on June 24. Importance of the cease fire and seeking clarification on recent changes in naval procedures with the LTTE would also be useful topics to raise during Deputy Secretary's upcoming meeting with Sri Lankan Navy chief

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Admiral Sandagiri. END COMMENT.

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